1920
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Types of Rhetorical Errors in the Written Themes of Freshmen

TYPES OF RHETORICAL ERROR

IN

THE WRITTEN THEMES OF COLLEGE FRESHMEN

BY

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A. B. University of Oklahoma, 1908

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

IN EDUCATION

IN

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

1920

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M45

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

August 3, 1920

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY Milton Monroe Maynard

ENTITLED Types of Rhetorical Errors in the Written Themes of College Freshmen

BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF Master of Arts in Education

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453223

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TYPES OF RHETORICAL ERROR

I

Introduction

The Purpose. This study seeks to determine the types of rhetorical error in the written themes of college freshmen. The investigation has grown out of the writer's own experience in teaching freshman English at Monmouth College, directed and motivated by the reading of the article by W. W. Charters on the Minimal Essentials in Language and Grammar (5:85), and is an attempt to do in the field of rhetoric what Professor Charters and others have done in the field of grammar: to ascertain what the errors made by the students really are in order that they may be removed , in the teaching process, by direct, frontal attack.

As far as the writer is aware, no attempt has been made before to determine the types of rhetorical error either in the themes of college students or in those of high school pupils. Similar studies, however, have been made of the errors in language and grammar in the elementary school. Professor Charters in the Sixteenth Year Book mentions ten such studies. Five of the studies deal with grammar alone and five with both language and grammar (5:87).

The Method of Procedure. All of the studies followed essentially the same plan. The teachers checked, for a specified time, the oral and the written themes, or either one of

them separately, of the children in the grades against accepted standards of linguistic correctness. The same general method was followed in this study of rhetorical errors, though an accepted standard of correctness in matters of rhetoric is obviously more difficult to determine than a similar standard in language and grammar. The method followed in this study is explained in detail in connection with each section of the study.

The Significance of the Studies in Grammar. The results obtained by Charters and other investigators show that the errors in language and grammar were not uniformly distributed over the entire field but were grouped at certain points. For instance, Supt. O. S. Thompson in his study of the language errors in six Illinois cities found that errors in the use of verbs were most frequent and that those due to omissions came next in rank (5:89). Supt. C. S. Meek reported that 40.1% of all errors in oral speech were due to mistakes in verbs, 20.4% to pronunciation and 17.2% to the misuse of pronouns (5:91). Betz and Marshall in their study of the written work of third grade pupils of Kansas City, Mo. found that 55% of all the errors were due to faults in punctuation, 28% to poor grammar and 17% to mistakes in language (5:92,93). The investigation of the oral errors in Cincinnati by Sears and Diebel showed that 49.9% of all such errors arose from the misuse of verbs, 13.5% from the wrong use of pronouns and 11.5% from mistakes in negatives (5:97). Professor Charters's own investigation revealed that more than half of the oral errors were made in verbs and that fourteen verbs were responsible for 85% of all such errors (5:102,103).

The results obtained, in as much as they give an insight into the nature of the pupil's difficulties, make the value of such studies obvious and suggest the desirability of similar studies in the field of rhetoric. This paper is the report of such an attempt based upon the written work of college freshmen.

The Source of Material. The material for this investigation was gathered from the writer's own classes in freshman English in Monmouth College and from other classes in the same institution indirectly under his control. The material was of two general types i. e. short weekly themes of one page each and book reports of five or six pages each. The shorter themes, upon which the study of words, sentences and paragraphs was based, were, with few exceptions, news items or editorials suitable for publication in the Monmouth College Oracle or in one of the Monmouth daily papers. The student was expected to write upon subjects upon which he could have first hand information and in which he had some positive interest or upon which he had some definite conviction. For the book reports the student was given the option of reading standard fiction or biography, though he was urged to read the biography and to try out for the cash prizes, amounting to $50, which are offered each year by a friend of the college to encourage biographical reading. As a matter of fact, about two-thirds of the reports scored were upon biographical subjects. Six book reports were required of each student, three each semester, distributed at approximately equal

intervals throughout the year.

Geographical Distribution of Students . For the study of words, sentences and paragraphs, themes were received from 144 different students who had come from 51 different secondary schools in 12 different states and 2 foreign countries. A fewer number of students, 110 in fact, are involved in the report on the study of the whole composition, though the general distribution is practically the same. Table I shows the geographical distribution of the students involved in sections II, III and IV of this report. Though, as might be expected from the location of Monmouth College, the majority of the students are from high schools of western Illinois and eastern Iowa, they come from a sufficiently large number of high schools to make them fairly representative of college freshmen of the middle west.

Table I

The geographical distribution of students involved in the study of words, sentences, and paragraphs.

Place	1918-1919	1919-1920
Monmouth	21	24
Illinois outside of Monmouth	28	14
Iowa	13	16
Nebraska	2	3
Missouri	1	3
Kansas		3
Colorado	3	3
California		1
Washington		1
Indiana		1
Ohio	2	1
New York	1	
Massachusetts		1
Foreign Country	1	1
Total	72	72

Basis for the Classification of Errors. A basis for the classification of errors was reached by an examination of fifteen textbooks in rhetoric and composition. The texts were all published or republished since 1900 and are, or have been, more or less widely used throughout the country. A list of the textbooks consulted follows.

Author — Title

Baldwin, Chas. S.--Composition, Oral and Written (1910)

Boynton, Percy--Principles of Composition (1915)

Brewster, Wm. T.--English Composition and Style (1912)

Canby and Others--English Composition in Theory and in Practice (1912)

Espenshade, A.H.--Essentials of Composition and Rhetoric (1913)

Fulton, Edward--English Prose Composition (1911)

Gardiner, Kittridge and Arnold--Manual of Rhetoric (1907)

Greenough and Hersey--English Composition (1917)

Herrick and Damon--Composition and Rhetoric (1912)

Lewis and Hosic--Practical English for High School (1916)

Linn, James Weber--Essentials of English Composition (1912)

Scott and Denney--New Composition and Rhetoric (1911)

Thomas and Howe--Composition and Rhetoric (1908)

Thorndike and Morse--Elements of Composition and Rhetoric (1918)

Wendell, Barrett ---Composition (1905)

It will be observed that the textbooks listed, with the exception of three, have appeared within the last ten years and that the authors of the books are men who have made their names familiar to students and teachers of rhetoric and composition. The texts are believed to be representative and to furnish a fairly reliable basis for determining a classification of rhetorical errors.

Major Divisions of the Study. An examination of textbooks listed revealed that, although they differ widely as to points of emphasis, they discuss in more or less detail the use of words, the construction of sentences and of paragraphs and the organization of the whole composition. This investigation is, therefore, confined to the classification of rhetorical errors in the use of words, in construction of sentences and of parahraphs and in the organization of the whole composition, those matters upon which rhetoricians are fairly well agreed as shown by textbooks in rhetoric and composition. Questions of rhythm, movement and personal touch, as well as the qualities of clearness, force and elegance, are not considered as such on account of the lack of an objective standard for measuring such qualities. The aim throughout has been to deal, as far as possible, with the objective rather than with the subjective elements of style, with the cause of the reaction rather than with the reaction itself, with the organization rather than with the effect to which the organization gives rise.

II

Errors in the Use of Words

Though textbooks in rhetoric differ slightly as to the classification of errors in the use of words, the most of them emphasize a two-fold division and those which do not make the division specifically imply such a classification under the head of (1) improprieties, good words incorrectly used, and (2) barbarisms, words not in good use. For instance, to use figured for planned, anxious for eager, latter for later, while for though is to be guilty of an impropriety; but to make enthusiasm into a verb enthuse, to speak of a man's flying off the handle or barking up the wrong tree is to fall into the meshes of barbarism.

Improprieties and Barbarisms, the Basis of Classification. Though most of the rhetorics mention triteness of expression as an error in diction, such errors were not scored in this study for the reason that there is lacking a list of trite words and also an objective principle for determining such a list. A phrase that might seem trite to one person might not seem trite to another, a phrase that might appear trite to an editor or to an instructor in English might have the freshness of originality to a college freshman, or to any other layman. Triteness is relative and subjective. It was decided, therefore, to ignore triteness of expression in this study and to classify the errors in the use of words upon the basis of improprieties and barbarisms.

The subjective element in the scoring is, by this method, reduced to the minimum in as much as the dictionary becomes the standard for determining the classification of errors in the use of words.

By the method outlined above, themes amounting to approximately 225,000 words in 1918-1919 and themes amounting to approximately 78,000 words in 1919-1920 were scored for errors in the use of words. Table II gives the result for the year 1918-1919 and Table III the corresponding data for 1919-1920.

How to Read the Tables. In these tables not only the word or words which were used but also the word or words which should have been used are listed. The tables are to be read as follows:

this	for	the	appeared	42	times,
to	"	too	"	23	" ,
there	"	their	"	23	"
while	"	and	"	17	" ,etc.

For instance, when the student wrote: "We, the affirmative, believe that the honor system should be adopted in Monmouth College for two reasons",the error was entered on the tally sheet believe for contend under the head of impropriety. But when the sentence read, "The students were greatly enthused over the prospects", the mistake was scored enthused for enthusiastic under the head of barbarisms.

Interpretation of Results.. The interpretation of the results of the scoring of themes for errors in the use of words involves the answering of three distinct questions: first, the question of the relative frequency of improprieties and barbarisms;

Table II

Types of error in impropriety appearing more than once in the themes of 72 students for the year 1918-1919. Not only the word used but that which should have been used is given.

this--the	41	assembled--gathered	2
to----too	23	at--on	2
there--their	23	by--from	2
our--the	18	caution--care	2
while--and	17	event--game, sport	2
in--into	13	expense--expenditure	2
while--though	10	himself--oneself	2
anxious--eager	9	liable--libel	2
bunch--crowd	5	most--largely	2
here--there	5	near--nearly	2
in--under	5	of--for	2
their--the	5	on--upon	2
their--there	4	of--in	2
average--ordinary	4	the--there	2
life--work	4	this--it	2
then--than	4	there--such	2
latter--later	4	until--when	2
and--to	3	very--greatly	2
here--where	3	witnessed--saw,seen	2
never--not	3	hurry--hasten	2
raised--reared	3	in spite of--despite of	2
toward--to	3	slow--slowly	2
with--by	3	students-members of S.A.T.C.	2
principal--principle	3	figured--planned	2
too--to	3	this--that	2
this--such	3	to--from	2
apt--likely	3	a--an	2
anxiously--eagerly	3		

In addition to the lists above,there were 325 types occurring one time each. There was a total of 610 errors in impropriety in 380 types, or set combinations.

Table III

Types of error in impropriety appearing more than once in the themes of 72 students for the first four months of the year 1919-1920. Not only the word used but that which should have used is given.

while--and	12	held--gave	2
and--to	7	apt--likely	2
this--the	6	addressed--lecture	2
witnessed--saw	4	witnessing--watching	2
like--as if	4	meeting --service	2
anxious--eager	4	decreed--ordered	2
to--too	3	address--sermon	2
while--though	3	in--into	2
then--than	3		

In addition to the lists above, there were 128 types occurring one time each. There was a total, for the first four months of the year, 190 errors in impropriety in 145 types, or set combinations.

second, the distribution of the errors among the students; and third, the distribution of the errors as to types and words.

Improprieties vs. Barbarisms. The answer to the first question is that the number of barbarisms in this study was so small that they might well be ignored as far as tabulation is concerned. Barring college slang, which was not scored if the punctuation showed that it had been used deliberately, only ten barbarisms were found in themes approximating 225,000 words (1918-1919) and only three in themes approximating 78,000 words (1919-1920). The results seem to show that that barbarisms are uncommon errors in the written work of college freshmen and bear out the conclusion of Barrett Wendell that "Improprieties are by far the commonest and most insidious offences against good use in words"(16:47).

Table IV

The distribution of 610 errors in impropriety among 72 students, 1918-1919.

No. Errors	No. Students	Total Errors
0	3	0
1	1	1
2	5	10
3	5	15
4	11	44
5	4	20
6	8	48
7	4	28
8	6	48
11	2	22
12	5	60
13	3	39
14	2	28
15	1	15
16	2	32
17	1	17
18	3	54
19	3	57
20	1	20
26	2	52
	72	610

Median 6.875

Table V

The distribution of 190 improprieties among 72 students 1919-1920.

No. Errors	No. Students	Total Errors
0	8	0
1	13	13
2	20	40
3	13	39
4	7	28
5	5	25
6	3	18
7	1	7
8	1	8
12	1	12
	72	190

Median 2.75

The Distribution of Errors among Students. Table IV and Table V give the distribution of errors in impropriety for the years 1918-1919 and 1919-1920 respectively. It will be observed that, though the number of students involved was the same, there was a much wider distribution of errors during the first year. The mode for 1918-1919 is 4 and the median 6.875; for the year 1919-1920 the mode is 2 and the median 2.75. The difference in the distributions for the two years is explained in part by the fact that, during the first half of the first year, the classes were made up almost exclusively of members of the S.A.T.C., some of whom under ordinary circumstances would not have been admitted to college classes in freshman English. But after due allowance is made for the extraordinary conditions of the first year , the fact remains that errors in the use of words,,as indicated by this study, are widely distributed and that the problem of diction for the college freshman is largely an individual problem, though certain common elements do appear with provoking persistency.

The Distribution of Errors as to Types. The problem of diction in freshman English is, as has been previously shown, primarily a problem of eliminating improprieties. Table II and Table III also offer some suggestions for eliminating such errors. For instance, 55 types are shown in Table II to be responsible for 282, or 41% of the 680 errors therein listed; and 17 types give rise to 62, or 32.6%, of the 190 errors in Table III. The eight words given in Table VI were the source

Table VI

List of eight words with times misused in themes scored during the year, 1918-1919.

Word	Times Misused
This	52
While	28
To	24
In	22
There	26
Their	9
Here	9
With	6
8	176

of 176, or 28.9%, of the 610 errors given in Table II; and two words, and and while, were responsible for 25, or 13.1%, of the 190 errors in Table III. In other words, a thorough mastery of the eight words of Table VI would have reduced the total number of errors in impropriety---and practically the total number of errors in diction---by 28.9% ; and the thorough mastery of two words, and and while, would have reduced the total errors for the year 1919-1920, as far as diction is concerned, by 13.1%.

Another fact worthy of mention is that all but four of the seventeen types appearing more than once in 1919-1920 are among the fifty-five types appearing more than once in 1918-1919, despite the fact that errors were collected during the entire year, 1918-1919, and only during the first four months of the following year. The data seem to indicate a certain tendency of certain verbal errors to appear among succeeding groups of

students, despite the fact that rhetorical errors of diction are largely individualistic.

General Conclusions. The first and most obvious conclusion from this study of rhetorical errors in the use of words is that the problem of diction is primarily a problem of how to avoid improprieties. However prevalent barbarisms may be upon the campus and in the ordinary conversation of the student, they are not a serious handicap in the written work of the first year student. The chief difficulty of the freshmen, as far as diction is concerned, is an inability to use with precision the few common words which he has, or is supposed to have, at his command. That eight such words as those listed in Table VI should give rise to 28.9% of the errors in diction is sufficient proof that students need to give more care to the words of every day speech. They need to be made to see and to feel the delicate hues of the common words of the language.

It appears also that no word is too familiar to be misused grossly. It seems almost that the more common the word the more likely it is to be used with a lack of discrimination. It borders on the incredible that errors in the use of such words as this, while, and, to, there, their, in, here, anxious, bunch, etc. should bulk so large in the themes of college students. Doubtless the majority of the students do know better: and the problem of the teacher is to develop habits of doing better. The writer expects to attack the problem next fall in the light of this study and to give drill upon the words and phrases most

commonly misused. By direct attack the difficulties should be removed in a short time, and the road cleared for more effective dealing with other forms of error.

III

Errors in Sentences

Textbooks in rhetoric and composition furnish a basis for determining a classification of errors in sentences, as was found to be the case with words. They, almost without exception, discuss in connection with sentences errors in unity, in coherence and in emphasis.[1] In view of the fact, however, that two or more of these errors may fall in the same sentence and be due to the same faulty combination of words, two arbitrary rules were necessary in scoring the papers:

1. No sentence was scored for an error in coherence if the same faulty construction gave rise to an error in unity;
2. No sentence was scored for an error in emphasis if the same faulty construction gave rise to an error either in unity or in coherence.

By this method the same faulty construction was scored but once though it may have given rise to two or more types of error.

1. Baldwin--Composition, Oral and Written, Implied
Boynton--Principles of Composition, pp. 99-133
Brewster--English Composition and Style, pp. 230-235
Canby and Others--English Composition, etc. pp. 113-138
Espenshade--Essentials of Composition and Rhetoric pp. 157-252
Fulton--English Prose Composition, pp. 28-43
Gardiner, Kittridge, Arnold--Manual of Rhetoric pp. 311-326
Greenough, Hersey--English Composition pp. 238-260
Herrick-Damon--Composition and Rhetoric pp. 268-310
Linn--Essentials of English Composition pp. 42-85
Scott-Denney--New Composition pp. 125-151
Thomas and Howe--Composition and Rhetoric pp. 126-161
Wendell--Composition pp. 76-114

Textbooks in rhetoric generally mention four ways in which the unity of a sentence may be destroyed, though the phraseology used by the writers is often such that the agreement in treatment is more real than apparent. The ways commonly mentioned directly or recognized by implication are:

1. By the inclusion of too many ideas,
2. By the inclusion of unrelated ideas,
3. By the abrupt shifting of the point of view, and
4. By the unskillful use of the compound sentence.

The papers were scored during the year 1918-1919 with the four-fold classification of errors of unity in mind. Out of approximately 1500 errors fewer than 100 were placed under section 4. One-third of the papers, roughly speaking, were re-examined with particular reference to the accuracy of the scoring under that section. It appeared that a stubborn subjective factor entered in distinguishing between types 1 and 2, and 4, and also between 3 and 4; and that the same factor entered frequently into a decision between 1 and 2. It seems that, in as much as errors under 1 and 2 are both errors in subject matter and those under 3 and 4 are both errors in arrangement, a dual classification of errors in unity would be more feasible. It was decided, therefore, to classify errors in unity as errors due

1. To improper subject matter, quantitatively or qualitatively considered;
2. To the abrupt shifting of the point of view or to other faults of arrangement.

By the revised scheme the subjective factor, though not eliminated, is reduced to the minimum. Below are illustrative examples, taken from student themes, of each type of error in unity.

A. Errors in unity due to improper subject matter:

1. It has been proved that the standard of scholarship will be raised and the boys will be improved physically naturally they themselves and their work will be worth more.
2. It(home-sickness) cannot be treated successfully by the local physician,the only way to cure the patient is to let him, or more often her, go home and put himself under the care of those whose ability to heal the malady cannot be denied.
3. The students who have not had a class the preceeding period are in their places at the right time but those who are held by another instructor are late and it makes a disturbance to have them coming into class after the bell rings.
4. Thus, you see, my ambition to enter college has been fulfilled, and my motto shall be as before, success and nothing less.
5. College life shoyld not be entered into lightly and as soon as there is a change from the sense of study as an obligation to the sense of study as an opportunity, the interest of the student will be greatly increased.

B. Errors in unity due to faulty arrangement:

1. If the student went home, there would be only a few days' stay and additional expense.
2. After signing the armistice Nov.11, the S.A.T.C. was entirely disbanded by Dec. 19 1918.
3. She does not need an army of only half-prepared school boys and the unit cannot be prepared with only two hours of training each day.
4. My opponents may say that the S.A.T.C. will make better citizens of the boys but an all-round college education will make better citizens of the men than the S.T.A.C.
5. If any boy wishes military drill, let him go to West Point or to Annapolis.

Textbooks in rhetoric and composition mention, in a varying terminology, several ways in which the coherence of a sentence may be destroyed. The ones most commonly mentioned, however, are those due:

1. To the omission of words,
2. To the misplacing of modifiers,
3. To wrong sobordination in clauses,participles,etc.,
4. To indefinite references, and
5. To the use of wrong connectives.

The last division was not followed in this study for two reasons:

1. The wrong connective is listed under the head of errors in the use of words, and
2. It was found by actual count to be an infrequent error in coherence, as it occurred only 27 times out of a total of 543 errors.

The papers were scored, therefore, for errors in coherence on the basis of the first four divisions given above. Below will be found sentences illustrative of the errors of each type, taken, as in the case of unity, from the regular themes of college students.

A. Errors in coherence due to the omission of words:

1. After his victory over the Swedes, he was taken sick, and, neglecting to care for himself, died a short time afterwards, a man of great character and much loved by his people.

2. His real diplomatic career began in 1865 a member of the Frankfort Diet.

3. There were sixty-six buildings in all, which were erected by the students.

4. Circumstances, however, compelled him to change his plans and turn his eyes to Africa.

5. With the aid of some officers from the French and English armies, his land forces were developed into a powerful army while, in the meantime, his navy strengthened three-fold.

B. Errors in coherence due to misplaced modifiers:

1. La Salle came to America when he was but a youth, leaving a home of wealth against the wishes of his parents,not being able to overcome the desire to secure a glimpse of the wonderful new world.

2. For the rest the foreign policy mainly aimed at isolating France and rendering her incapable of forming anti-German alliances.

3. One of the most important, How the Other Half Lives, pictures the condition of a class often not thought of by most people.

4. In doing this, he showed the nobility of his character by coming half-way and by inviting the white race to grant justice to the negro based upon actual merit.

5. He so cleverly conceals his identity that, from all he says against the white man, one could not tell that he was a negro.

C. Errors in coherence due to wrong subordination:

1. The family of Bismark had been noted for centuries, having gained the reputation for producing soldiers and statesmen.

2. He showed the negro his station in life, giving justice to the white man by not demanding social recognition.

3. He won few converts so they fled to Abissynia.

4. He died, however, soon after his troops left so he never knew how far his religion spread.

5. Today it is an organization firmly established from coast to coast, numbering in its membership over

100,000 adult leaders and approximately 370,000 boys, reckoned as one of the strongest forces for law and order in America.

D. Errors in coherence due to indefinite reference:

1. This (referring to the whole idea of the previous sentence) is one of the strongest and most reasonable arguments for an education.

2. Among other things this shows that he was strongly Christian in principles and in faith.

3. It (referring to the whole idea of the previous paragraph) has differed from the artiist's wielding of the brush or the musician's touching of the keys, yet it has been an accomplishment as full of art and beauty as either of those.

4. David learned the principle of thrift and industry and the fear of God, which prepared him for his xx life work.

5. Much thought and patience were required to deal with them properly. In spite of this, however, the natives learned to love and to trust him.

Emphasis in Sentences. Rhetoricians are fairly well agreed upon the ways in which emphasis in a sentence may be destroyed. The ways usually listed and the ones followed in this study are:

1. By a failure to place the important idea xx in the most prominent position i.e. at the beginning or at the end of the sentence,
2. By a failure to bury in the sentence such connectives as then, therefore, however, etc.,
3. By the use of too many words, by hiding the thought in in needless verbiage, a violation of the law of economy.

In scoring the papers under the three-fold classification little difficulty was experienced, though the subjective element was, as might be expected, always more in evidence in scoring for errors in emphasis than in scoring for errors in unity and in coherence, for the reason that unity and coherence strike more closely at the structural stability of the sentences than does emphasis. Unity and coherence determine what the message shall really be; emphasis, whether the message shall carry conviction. Sentences, taken from student themes,,illustrative of the three types of errors in emphasis are given below.

A. Errors in emphasis due to the wrong placing of the main thought.

1. He could not always use ordinary methods among the natives.

2. The idea has touch the hearts of the majority but still there are those who cannot see the need of conserving.

3. It is a fact that men do not think any more than is necessary, but they like something that makes them think.

4. He arrived at Hampton after enduring many hardships and entered school there.

B. Errors in emphasis due to failure to bury in the sentence such connectives as then, therefore, however, etc.:

1. Also the teachers are"at sea" as to when classes are to be let out.

2. Therefore the system of grading encourages cheating and thereby lowers the standard of scholarship.

3. Now to keep the literary societies going is a problem.

4. Therefore the long lessons should come on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and the short ones on Mondays.

C. Errors in emphasis due to the use of too many words:

1. Because of patriotism and love for their Alma Mater, not to mention loyalty to their pocket-books, many of the boys, who were so unfortunate that they could not go home during vacation, labored hard on the athletic park in order to mkae it ready for track and baseball.

2. Students often lose a clear sense of right as in the case where they endeavor to rattle the rival team and thereby hope to win the game.

3. If before a game, a "pep"meeting is held and the college spirit is aroused, the men that play on the teams know that the school is behind them and therefore try to do their best.

4. It is a much debated proposition and has advocates on both sides.

Scheme for Scoring Errors in Sentences. A condensed scheme by which the themes were scored for rhetorical errors in sentences is given below. The writer feels that the scheme has the merit of brevity and practicability. The students soon learned the nature of the error to look for under each symbol.

A. Unity:
   Su.^{1}--Errors in subject matter,too many or unrelated ideas.
   Su.^{2}--Errors in arrangement.

B. Coherence:
   Sco.^{1}--Errors due to omission,
   Sco.^{2}--Errors due to misplaced modifiers,
   Sco.^{3}--Errors due to wrong subordination,
   Sco.^{4}--Errors of indefinite or faulty reference.

C. Emphasis:
   Semph.^{1}--Errors due to wrong position of important words,
   Semph.^{2}--Errors to failure to bury connectives,
   Semph.^{3}---Errors due to too many words,verbiage.

On the basis of the classification given above, freshman themes, amounting to approximately 225,000 words for 1918-1919 and to approximately 78,000 words for 1919-1920, were scored for rhetorical errors in sentences. In as much as the themes were read by the writer as a part of his regular school work and were scored for errors in grammar and in punctuation as well as for rhetorical errors in the use of words, in the construction of sentences and of paragraphs, mistakes have doubtless crept in. The re-checking of the themes in class as the students were revising their work has, however, convinced the writer that wrong scorings are relatively few and that errors, such as have crept in, are largely errors of omission rather than errors of commission, so that the total number of errors is more likely to have been greater than less than the number given. It is scarcely probable that the relative frequency of the various types of error would be materially changed by repeated scoring.

Tabulation of Results, and How Read. Table VII shows the distribution of rhetorical errors in sentences for the scholastic year 1918-1919 and Table VIII gives the corresponding data for the first four months of the scholastic year 1919-1920. Table IX is a condensed statement of the facts brought out in Table VII and in Table VIII. Table VII and Table VIII are to be read as follows: For instance, student No.13 (Table VII) made 26 errors in unity on account of putting too much in the sentence and 15 errors in unity on account of faulty arrangement of the words in the sentence. The same

student violated the principle of coherence 6 times by omitting necessary words, 2 times by misplacing modifiers and 5 times by a failure to secure the correct subordinations. He was also guilty of 7 errors in emphasis on account of failing to put the important idea in the emphatic position and 7 more on account of superfluous verbiage. By reading straight across the table the record of any individual student may be ascertained. Table VIII is, of course, read in exactly the same way.

Interpretation of Results. A glance at Table IX raises the question as to why more errors were found under Co.4 and Emph.3 during the four months of 1919-1920 than during the entire school year 1918-1919 when three times as many papers were scored. The discrepancy under Co.4 is explained by the fact that during the first period, the use of this to refer to the whole idea of the previous sentence or paragraph was scored as an error in grammar and consequently not included in this study, even though it might have destroyed the coherence of the sentence. The discrepancy under Emph.3 is not so easily explained though the writer feels that a partial explanation may be found in the fact that the majority of the students for the year 1918-1919 were members of the S.A.T.C. whose preparation in English was, in some cases, so poor that their errors were usually caught under the head of unity or coherence. (See rules 1 and 2, page 16.)

Aside from the discrepancies noted above, there is a rather close similarity in the two distributions, and in every

Table VII

The distribution of rhetorical errors in sentences among 72 students during the year 1918-1919.

Students	U1	U2	Co1	Co2	Co3	Co4	Emph1	Emph2	Emph3
1								1	
2	2	2		2	1				
3	2	3	11	1	3	4	1		3
4	9	10	2	3	6	3	2	6	1
5	13	13	1	4	5		2	2	2
6	6	4	4	5	1		1	1	2
7	2	3	6		4		3		1
8	2	4	1		2			2	
9	6	1	1	1	1		1		2
10	1	3	1	1			1		
11	1	3	1	1				1	
12	4	3	2		3	1	1		
13	26	15	6	2	5		7		7
14	6	9	1	1	4				
15	26	14	4	1	2	1			5
16	2	7	1	2				3	
17	2	2	2		1				
18									
19	6	15	6	3	8		4	1	1
20	6	12	3	2	2	2	2	1	3
21	3	3	1		1	1	3	9	2
22	5	5	1		2		2		
23	6	1					1	1	
24	6	4	2			1			
25	5		3	2	1		1		1
26	4	12	5	2	2	2	3	1	2
27	3	1	1	2	3	3			1
28			2	4	3				1
29	5	9	7	1	3				5
30	4	1	1				1		
31	6	5			1		1	1	1
32	5	13	4	4	6	1	5	3	4
33	21	6	3		3	1	1		
34	11	8	6	2	3		1		2
35	7	6	5	3	6	1	3	1	1
36	3	3	1			1	1		
37	2	7	1	1	2				
38	7	11	10	1	3		5		4
39	2	4			1	1			
40	6	9	4	3		1	1	22	1
41	4	4	4		1		1	1	1
42	2	2	2	1	1		2	2	2

Table VII

(Concluded)

Student	U.1	U.2	Co.1	Co.2	Co.3	Co.4	Emp.1	Emp.2	Emp.3
43	8	12	4	1	3		3	4	6
44	1	5	2	4					
45	2	3	3	3	1		2		5
46	5	5		4	1			2	
47	2	3		1			5	2	1
48	2	1	1						
49	1	2	1	2	2		2		5
50	11	10	1	3	11		4		3
51	1	5	2	2	2		2	3	2
52	6	11	6	1	4	3		2	3
53	3	3	2		2			2	
54	5	7	1		4		1		1
55	8	4	3	1	1				1
56	8	8	2		2		2		1
57	3	2	1	4	2		4	2	1
58	4	7	4	1	4	1			
59	3	6	2					1	
60	4	10	5	2	6	1	2	1	4
61	3	1	1						
62	1				2				
63		4	2		1			1	
64	3	6				1			
65		1			1				
66	4	11	6	4	11		4		2
67	1	5	7	1	5		4	1	1
68	2	1							
69	5	3	3	2	1	2	1	1	
70	9	4	2	1	2		2		1
71		5	3	1			2	3	
72	13	4	1	2			1		2
Total	357	394	180	98	157	31	98	66	94

Table VIII

The distribution of rhetorical errors in santences among 72 students during four months of year, 1919-1920.

Student	U.1	U.2	Co.1	Co.2	Co.3	Co.4	Emp.1	Emp.2	Emp.3
1	2	3	2	2		4	1		8
2	4	2	2	1	4	2	1		10
3	1	2				3	1		3
4	5	4	2		3	4	3		3
5	1				3	1		1	2
6	4	4	1	2	6			2	4
7	2	2			3				2
8	3	2			2	1	1		1
9	7	2		1			2		7
10	4	1				1		2	5
11	1		2	1		1	1		1
12	1		2	2		1	1	1	3
13	4	1		1	1	4	1		2
14		1			1		1		1
15	3		1	2	1	1			2
16	2	2	1		10	1	2		2
17	4	3	2	1	2	1			4
18	7		1		1	1		1	5
19	2	4	2	3	1	2	1		1
20	1			1	1	1	1		
21	8	2	1	2		1	1	2	2
22			1	1	1				2
23	4		3		1	1			1
24	1	2		1	2		1		
25	3		2			3	1	2	
26	2	1	5	1	1	2	1		1
27	1		1	2				2	2
28		1			2	2			3
29	3	1	1		3	1			5
30	14	3			2	1	1	2	
31	1				1	3			3
32	3		1		2	5	1		
33	3	3	2	1	2	4	1	1	2
34	1	1	2	1	1		1	1	2
35		1	2			4	1		5
36	10	4	1	3	2		1		3
37	1	1	4	1			1		1
38	3		2		1				3
39	1			1		1	1	1	
40	4	1		1	1				1
41	4	2		3	2	1			2
42	4	2							

Table VIII

(Concluded)

Student	U.1	U.2	Co.1	Co.2	Co.3	Co.4	Emp.1	Emp.2	Emp.3
43	1			1	1				3
44	3	2				1			2
45	2	3	2	1	3	3	1	2	3
46	2	3		1	1		6	1	
47		2	2	1	1	2	2		2
48	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2
49	3	1	1	3	4	1	1	2	1
50		1	2	3	2	1	1	1	2
51	1	1	1			1		1	1
52	2	1	4	1		4	2	1	1
53	1	1		2	2	3	1	1	3
54	5	1					2		1
55	5	1		1		1		1	
56					1	1	1	1	1
57	3	1	1	1	4	7	1	1	3
58	2						4		2
59	1	1	1				1	1	2
60	6	2	4	1	4	3	1		4
61	1	5	4	1	4	3	3		1
62		2	3		1	3			2
63	2					1	1	1	2
64			2	1	2	1			2
65	1	1			1	1	2		2
66	5			1	3	2	1	1	2
67		2			3				1
68	1	1	2	1					
69	3		2	1	2	1			2
70									1
71	1	1					1	1	
72		1			1			2	
Total	182	110	79	56	102	101	64	38	149

case the number of errors for the last period is greater than would be expected on the basis of the number of themes read. The total errors in sentences for 1918-1919 were 1475 and for 1919-1920, 881, or 59.7% of that for the previous year, although the number of words read was only about one-third as large. The result, however, is about what might be expected in view of the fact that the last group of papers was collected during the first four months of the year only and the first during the entire year. It is also to be borne in mind that the students were continually reminded of the particular type of error to which they were individually prone and were actually required to correct, in class, the errors scored upon their themes. The record for each class shows a fairly steady decline through the year in the number of errors, though, of course, some students proved themselves quite impervious to criticism and practically untouched by the general advancement of the class.

Table IX

The facts of Table VII and VIII in condensed form.

Year	U.1	U.2	Co.1	Co.2	Co.3	Co.4	Emp.1	Emp.2	Emp.3
1918-1919	357	394	180	98	157	31	98	66	94
1919-1920	182	110	79	56	102	101	64	38	149
Total	539	504	259	154	259	132	162	104	243

Table X

Total errors in sentences and the distribution of the errors expressed in per cent.

Year	Total Errors	Unity	Coherence	Emphasis
1918-1919	1475	50.9	31.6	19.5
1919-1920	881	33.1	38.3	28.6
1918-1920	2356	44.6	34.1	21.3

Major Types of Errors in Sentences. Possibly the most significant facts in regard to the distribution of rhetorical errors in sentences are brought out in Table X where the results are expressed in per cent under the major types, unity, coherence, emphasis. The table shows that, for the two years for which data were gathered, 44.6% of the rhetorical errors in sentences sprang from the violation of the principle of unity and 34.1% arose from a failure to observe the principle of coherence. In other words, 78.7% of the errors grew out of the inability of the student to grasp the essential oneness of the sentence and the necessity of putting like things together. Since unity and coherence in sentence structure must be achieved by the student before he can hope to rise to the more artistic level of rhetorical emphasis, the pedagogical value of the point brought out by the table is evident. Unity and coherence, at least of a mechanical type, should be attained in high school but emphasis, which serves to give the delicate touch of art to the sentence in spoken and in written speech, is possibly a

life-study. It offers such endless possibilities of improvement that no one can expect to attain to complete mastery but one may by proper care eliminate the grosser and more obvious errors.

Distribution among Students. It must not be forgotten, however, despite the evident grouping of the errors in sentences under unity and coherence, as shown in Table X, that the errors are, as is evident from Table VII and Table VIII, distinctively individualistic. For instance, student No.5 (Table VII) had thirteen errors under U.1 and the same number under U2. He had, however, only ten errors in coherence distributed in the order of one-four-five, and six errors in emphasis equally divided among the three types. Student No.49 with a more stable sentence structure had three errors in unity distributed in the order of one, two, five errors under the first three types in coherence and two each under Emphasis 1 and 3. No.1 in the same Table made but one error in sentence structure that could be caught in the scoring and No.18 was free from formal, rhetorical errors in sentences.

Conclusion. The results obtained in this investigation tend to show that college freshmen need much drill upon the principles of unity and of coherence and a less amount upon the formal and more fundamental ways of securing emphasis in the sentence. When they have attained to some mastery in these points, they may pass, with profit, to the consideration of the more subtle questions of rhythm and personal touch, but not till then.

IV

Errors in Paragraphs

Basis of Classification. As in the case of the use of words and in the construction of sentences, textbooks in rhetoric and composition offer a basis for the classification of errors in paragraph structure.[1] The major types of error recognized are those of unity, coherence and emphasis. The subdivisions were not, however, so easily determined and certain arbitary decisions were found to be necessary. The details of the arbitrary rulings are given in connection with the discussion of the major types of error.

Errors in Unity of Paragraph. Four sources of error in unity of paragraph are generally recognized by rhetoricians.

1. Baldwin--Composition, Oral and Written, Implied
Boynton--Principles of Composition, pp. 51-85
Brewster--English Composition and Style, pp. 88-140
Canby & Others-English Composition in Theory, Practice pp. 736
Espenshade--Essentials of Composition and Rhetoric, pp. 99-101
Fulton--English Prose Composition, pp. 12-28
Gardiner, Kittridge, Arnold--Manual of Rhetoric, pp. 278-296
Greenough & Hersey--English Composition, pp. 209-233
Herrick & Damon--Composition and Rhetoric, pp. 318-332
Linn--Essentials of English Composition pp. 34-
Scott & Denney--New Composition and Rhetoric, pp. Implied
Thomas & Howe--Composition and Rhetoric, pp. 34-84
Wendell--Composition, pp. 114-147

They are errors due:

1. To the inclusion of too many thoughts,
2. To the inclusion of unrelated thoughts,
3. To the abrupt shifting of the point of view,
4. To a failure to follow a definite order, logical or chronological.

A careful analysis of the classification reveals that the categories are not mutually exclusive. A paragraph with two or more unrelated thoughts would necessarily have too many thoughts in it, and could not, therefore, express a definite, unified thought. The attempt to score the papers by the four-fold classification indicated also the presence of a stubborn subjective element in any effort to discriminate between one and two and between two and four. It was decided, therefore, to classify errors in paragraph under two heads, as follows: errors due

1. To the inclusion of too many or unrelated thoughts,
2. To the faulty arrangement of the thoughts in the paragraph, from a lack of logical or chronological order.

The first division centers the mind upon the subject matter of the paragraph, the quantity and the quality; the second stresses the mechanical arrangement of the various thought-groups which go to make up the paragraph. Illustrative examples, taken from students' themes, of each type of error in unity of para-

graph are given below.

A. Errors in unity of paragraph due to the inclusion of too many or to unrelated thoughts:

1. Bismark's next step was back into diplomatic service. As a member of the Frankfort Diet, he attracted attention as an Ultra-Royalist. His real diplomatic career began in 1851 a member of the Frankfort Diet. While at Frankfort, Bismark upheld the prestige of Prussia against her larger rival, Austria. In 1862 Bismark was sent as ambassador to Paris in order to give him an insight into French politics. During the same year, he was recalled to take the portfolio of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the presidency of the Cabinet. During this period Bismark showed his quality by standing by the king and defeating the liberal movement that swept over the country. The action of the king of Denamrk made it possible for Bismark to scheme around and after a war with Denamrk annex the Elbe Duchess, Holstein and Schleswig. In 1870 the attitude of the French toward the candidature of Prince Leopold for the throne of Spain gave Bismark the opportunity of carrying into action the intensified feeling of unity of the Germans. Bismark was the spokesman of Germany, he it was that dictated the terms of peace to France in 1871. Bis mark had been made count in 1866, he was now made Prince and Chancellor of the Empire. Following the peace of 1871 the sole aim of Bismark's policy was to consolidate the young empire of his own creation.

2. Poverty cut David's education in the public schools very short. At the age of ten he stopt going to village school and began working in a factory. However he showed a great desire for knowledge and his spare time was spent in reading. It was thru his wide book reading that he first learned the condition of foreign countries, and after an appeal by a Chinese missionary he became greatly interested in thework and he determined to use all he had for the natives of Africa. He immediately took up the study of medicine and theology, and in the year 1840 he was sent to that heathen land. He set to work at once and going into the interior, in fact 800 miles from the coast, he established his first mission at Mabotsa. Here he settled down and for the next thirty years, or until he died in April 1875, he labored among the black men, giving them an understanding of God and teaching them His word. His position was a dangerous one and his choice showed his strong faith and trust in God.

Livingston's life is unequalled as an illustration of what perseverance and a firm belief in God will accomplish.

B. Errors in unity of paragraph due to improper arrangement:

1. The program began with the singing of America by the student body, followed by a musical number by the combined glee clubs of the college. Then came the main address of the morning by Prof. L. E. Robinson, after which the service flag was taken down by the guard of honor composed of Ruth Bishop, Martha Thompson, Betty Ferguson, Miss Altman, Wylie Beveridge, David Livingston and Oscar Gibson, to be put away with other treasures of Monmouth College. On the flag are 114 stars, three of which are gold, representing only the boys who were actually in school at the outbreak of the war. After singing the Star Spangled Banner a line of march was formed from chapel to the flag pole, going by the way of Wallace Hall, where a United States flag was hoisted.

2. The enforced vacations have put the classes back in their work. The semester will close on January 28 as planned in the beginning of the term. The classes for the next two weeks will do extra work to make up for lost time.

3. Mankind is also fond of paths. In his savage state we found his tracks between the tree trunks, on the hillside and along the river bank; merely the black earth worn smooth by the traffic of many feet. By and by in the course of his development he learned how to make pebble or gravel walks and later board walks. Today we have the cement walk as an evidence of a superior civilization.

Paragraph Coherence. Nine of the textbooks examined discuss specifically coherence of the paragraph.[1] Altogether

1. Brewster--English Composition and Style pp.114-
Canby & Others-English Composition,etc.pp.90-91
Espenshade--Essentials of Composition and Rhetoric,pp.104-
Greenough & Hersey--English Composition,pp.220-229
Herrick & Damon--Composition and Rhetoric,pp.326-329
Lewis and Hosic-Practical English for High School,pp.38-43
Thomas &Howe--Composition and Rhetoric,pp.51-85
Thorndike & Morse-Elem. of Composition,pp.52-53
Wendell--Composition,pp.142-147

three ways are mentioned in which the coherence of the paragraph may be destroyed:

1. Through a disregard of the time order,
2. Through a disregard of the logical order,
3. Through a failure to use the proper connectives.

Little could be gained, it would seem, by making a distinction between errors due to a failure to follow a logical order and those due to a failure to follow a chronological order, even if such a distinction were always possible. Nor does it appear that the omissions of connectives is the only type of omission that might destroy the coherence of a paragraph. The omission of sentences might have the same effect.

The Classification of Errors in Coherence. It was felt, therefore, in view of the facts mentioned in the previous paragraph, that a better classification of errors in coherence of the paragraph would be:

1. Errors due to the omission of words, phrases or sentences, and
2. Errors due to the faulty arrangement of sentences in the paragraph or to the excessive breaking up of paragraphs.

And such was the plan followed in this study and it proved, in practice, convenient and workable. Illustrative examples from students' themes of errors of each type are given below.

A. Errors in paragraph coherence due to omissions:

1. In relating her experience Miss Barnes told some of the trials that a missionary must face. The first two years in Egypt the native language is learned. This is very difficult language and the missionary often becomes discouraged. The speaker urged the girls to pray for the missionaries in Egypt, especially those who are there for the first time.

2. The fun began with a farce by the nineteen new members concluded with the initiation proper, the purpose of which was to determine if the girls were good "sports". These demonstrated to all that they were willing to be laughed at and then took the membership pledge. A delicious two course supper was served after which the old members gave as their share of the entertainment a dramatization of various songs popular during the war. The meeting closed with singing in an earnest manner "Just Aletheorian is good enough for me".

3. Monmouth College laid aside her books last Wednesday and prepared for a siege of smallpox. One of the girls was taken ill and the state health officer declared the case smallpox. The sick girl was removed to the Terrace and the girls at the Terrace were transferred to McMichael Home. The dormitory is quarantined, but the epidemic is checked, it is likely that it will be lifted and classes resumed in a few days.

B. Errors in paragraph coherence due to faulty arrangement:

1. Mr. Shoemaker was going west on Broadway and the R. I. & S. car was bound east. Shoemaker was driving astraddle of the north rail, and when he tried to turn out of the way of the car, the rear wheel of his automobile skidded on the wet rail, hence the R. I. & S. car hit him. The street car window was smashed and the guard broken from its pivot. The motorman applied the brakes before he hit Shoemaker but the car did not stop till it had reached the middle of the next block. Shemaker's car was badly broken up. The rear wheel was pushed from out the hub and the axil badly bent. The fender was ripped off and badly broken where the car hit it. The glass windshield cut Mr. Shoemaker's hands and face. He walked down town to a doctor and had them dressed and they were healing as well as could be expected. The damaged Grant Six was taken from the scene of action later in the day. It will cost quite a sum to get it repaired.

2. Monmouth College won the singles in tennis tournament held at Know College last Saturday. Evelyn Douglass and Jenette Meredith were the representatives from Monmouth. Knox won the doubles.

3. On entering each girl was given a card on which was written a rhyme telling to which of the groups she belonged. The girls were divided into three groups. While one group was playing games, another was telling ghost stories and the third was witnessing the play, Bluebeard's Wives. Here was seen the heads of the murdered wives of Bluebeard. After all the girls had been in each room, a Halloween play, representing the experiences of a girl who was not afraid of ghosts was given by the members of the society.

Paragraph Emphasis. Thirteen of the fifteen textbooks[1] consulted discuss, in very much the same way, paragraph emphasis. A paragraph is said to be lacking in emphasis when the central thought does not stand out clearly, when the major thought is obscured by minor details. Though the statement of the main thought at the beginning or at the end of paragraph tends to give the proper emphasis, it is by no means a guarantee of correct massing. After a strong topic sentence, "a paragraph may trail off into weakness" (12:38) and a string of weak sentences may be followed at the close by a forceful rounding-out of the

1. Boynton--Principles of Composition, pp. 71-75
Brewster-English Composition and Style, pp. 68-70
Canby & Others-English Compostion, et. pp. 91-
Espenshade--Essentials of Composition, pp. 107-109
Fulton--English Prose Composition, pp. 24-
Gardiner, Kittridge, Arnold--Manual of Rhetoric, pp. 278-296
Greenough & Hersey--English Composition, pp. 230-233
Herrick & Damon--Composition and Rhetoric, pp. 330-
Linn--Essentials of English Composition, pp. 38-
Thomas & Howe--Composition and Rhetoric, pp. 58-
Thorndike & Morse--Composition and Rhetoric, pp. 51
Wendell--Composition, pp. 126-133

main thought. A paragraph may also be sound in emphasis without containing a topic sentence. The paragraph is strong in emphasis when and only when the central purpose of the paragraph can be grasped readily and unmistakably.

This study makes no effort to distinguish different ways in which emphasis may be destroyed. If the paragraph was lacking in striking power and at the same time was sound in unity and in coherence, it was scored for an error in emphasis. Examples of such errors,taken from students' themes, follow.

A. Errors in emphasis of paragraph:

1. Many were disappointed to learn that Rev. George Stephens, the evangelist, could not possibly be here to begin the evangelistic services this week. The disability was caused by the ill-health of Mr. Stephens, due to the strain to which he was subjected in the campaign he has just closed.

2. The state inspector had been called to Monmouth to decide whether several cases in town diagnosed as smallpox by the local physicians were really smallpox. While in Monmouth, he was called to the dormitory to pass judgment on a case there of which the local doctor was in doubt. Upon deciding that it was smallpox, the inspector ordered that the college be closed until every one could be vaccinated. Consequently there was no school Wednesday afternoon and Thursday.

3. After this part of the program, Dr. McMichael read the names of the boys who have blue stars on the service flag and also the those who gave their lives for safety in the world war, or those who have gold stars. The service flag which has hung in chapel for the last few years was taken down and laid away by the guard of honor, consisting of Betty Ferguson, Ruth Bishop, Miss Altman, Lawrence Gibson, Wylie Beveridge and David Livingston. After this the flag was unfolded and carried to the flagpole by the guard of honor, followed by the students and faculty, where it was raised with the usual ceremonies.

Plan Used for Scoring Errors in Paragraphs. A brief outline of the plan used in scoring papers for errors in paragraph structure is given below.

A. Unity:

PU.1--Too many or unrelated thoughts.

PU.2--Faulty arrangement of sentences.

B. Coherence:

PCo.1--Omission of words, phrases or sentences.

PCo.2-- Faulty arrangement of sentences.

C. Emphasis:

PEmph.1--Failure to make the central purpose of the paragraph stand out clearly.

On the basis of the classification given above freshman themes were scored during the scholastic years 1918-1919 and 1919-1920. The results for the two years are given in tabular form in Table XI. It so happened that the same number of students was involved each year; and in the table each number in the student column stands for two students, one for each year. In no case, however, is the record of any student reported twice.

Interpretation of Results. It will be observed that Table XI gives for the paragraph what Table VII, Table VIII and Table IX give for the sentence, and that a comparison of the results for the two years may be read from the last line of the table. As in the case of sentences, the number of errors under each heading, with one exception, varies from one-third to one-

Table XI

The distribution of errors in paragraphs among 144 students, 72 for each year, 1918-1919, 1919-1920.

Student	Pu.1 '18-'19		Pu.2 '18-'19		Pco.1 '18-'19		Pco.2 '18-'19		Pemp.1 '18-'19	
1	1		1			2	1	2	1	2
2	3	2				1		4		2
3	17	1	3		2	1	3	2	14	2
4	13	3	1		1		1	14	8	3
5	16	7	2	1			4	6		
6	3	1				2		2	6	2
7	7	4	5	1		1	12	4	1	1
8	2	2			1		4	1	1	2
9	1	2				1	7	5	3	1
10	2	2	4				2	3		3
11	4	1	2	1	1	1		1	7	1
12	11	2	3				2	6		4
13	2	2	4				2	4		
14	4	2	3			1		4	2	
15	16	5	8				1	6	4	1
16	5				1	1			1	2
17	4	1						2	1	3
18		8			1	1		4		3
19	14	2	1			3	8	3	6	
20	11	1	3		1	1	5	1	6	1
21	8	2	2	1			4		3	8
22	3	2	2		1		6	11		2
23	3	3	2		1	1	1	1		4
24	3	3	2			1	1	1	1	4
25	4	4	2	1			2	2	2	1
26	5	2	1				4	4	5	5
27	3	2		1			1	2	4	
28	5	2		1			3	2	1	4
29	11	2		1			5	3	7	4
30	4	2				1	3	1		5
31		1	2	1			2	1		4
32	19		6				4	9	4	
33	4	4	1	1			11	3	3	
34	7	2	4					8	4	1
35	11	5					5	2	6	2
36	4	5				1		4	3	1
37	3	1					4	5		1
38	8	3	4		1		7		5	2
39	4	1						3		
40	3	1	3		1				9	
41	8	1				1	4	6	1	

Table XI

(Continued)

Student	Pu.1 '18-	'19	Pu.2 '18-	'19	Pco.1 '18-	'19	Pco.2 '18-	'19	Pemp.1 '18-	'19
42	4	1	1	1		1	6	4		
43	13	3	4	1			8	5	2	4
44	10	3			1	1	2	5	5	1
45	12	1	4		1	1	4	6	2	1
46	3	1		1			6	7		
47	9	1	1	3	3	2	6	8	3	1
48	1	2		3				3		1
49	4	3	2		1		1		1	3
50	5			1	1		3	1	7	1
51	5	4		1			3	2		2
52	5	3	3			1	1	7	7	1
53	2	1	2				1	5	2	3
54	4	4	2				1	1	2	
55	2	1	1				4	3	2	2
56	5						2	1	3	1
57	2	2	1				3	2	1	6
58	4	1	2	1			4	3	1	3
59	3	2	4		1		1	3		5
60	9	1		1			2	1	5	3
61	3	2	1	1		1	5	7	3	
62	6	5					6	4	6	2
63	1	4				2		3	1	
64	2						1	2	1	2
65	1	2				1	2		2	3
66	7	1	8	1	2		9	2	6	2
67	10	4					3	2	1	2
68	2	4			1			3	1	2
69	2	1			1		5	1	9	1
70	1		2				3	1	1	3
71	6		1	1		1	10		1	1
72	18		2			1	2	1	2	
Total	427	162	110	37	23	35	426	226	202	136

half greater for the first period than for the second, though the material from which the errors were gathered was approximately three times as great for the first period as for the second--a fact which tends to show, as in the case of sentences, a progressive decline of errors through the year.

Table XI brings out also the indivdual errors of the students. For instance, student No.3 for the year '18 showed a strong tendency to make box-cars of his paragraphs and to crowd things into them without discrimination. He had twenty errors in unity, seventeen of which were due to the inclusion of too much or unrelated subject matter. He had, also, fourteen errors in emphasis and only five in coherence, two on account of omissions and three on account of arrangement. His compatriot of the following year, however, had only one error in unity, three in coherence and two in emphasis. His chief difficulty was not in being unable to feel the unity of subject matter but in arranging the thought-groups so as to secure coherence. Student No.64 for '18 and student No.64 for '19 had practically no trouble with the formal phases of paragraph structure. The former had two errors in unity and one each in coherence and in emphasis; the latter had two errors in coherence and two in emphasis. And thus the record throughout shows a distinctively individual tendency.

But despite the individualistic trend of the errors in paragraph structure, there is an even more pronounced bunching of the errors under unity and coherence. Table XII brings out

the same facts in another way and makes them comparable with those given in Table X.

Table XII

Total errors in paragraphs and the distribution of the errors expressed in per cent.

Year	Total Errors	Unity	Coherence	Emphasis
1918-1919	1195	44.9	38.3	16.8
1919-1920	596	33.3	43.7	23.0
1918-1920	1791	41.0	40.0	19.0

Conclusions. Table X and Table XII bring out the desirability of stressing unity and coherence in the written work of college freshmen, for, on the basis of the themes scored, 44.6% of all rhetorical errors in sentences and 41% of all rhetorical errors in paragraphs were due to the violation of the principle of unity; and 34.1% of all rhetorical errors in sentences and 40% of all rhetorical errors in pragraphs were due to the violation of the principle of coherence. By a thorough mastery of the principles of unity and coherence as they apply to the sentence and to the paragraph, more than three-fourths of the rhetorical errors in those two fundamental units of composition could, it would seem, have been eliminated.

Need for emphasis upon Unity and Coherence. If it is true, as this study seems to prove, that errors in unity and in

coherence of sentence and of paragraph bulk so large relatively in the written work of college freshmen, obviously those principles should receive special attention in the teaching process, especially since unity and coherence of sentence and of paragraph lie at the basis of all effective use of the mother tongue. Unless the student can grasp the essential unity of both the sentence and the paragraph and can attain to a fine sense for putting like things together, unless he can make unity and coherence automatic in his own thinking processes, he can never be more than a dabbler in the king's English.

That those principles have been and are discussed in all classes in rhetoric and composition goes without saying. It is a question, however, whether teachers have not applied themselves to the whole field of rhetoric without stopping to inquire what really ought to be taught. Possibly there has been too much firing at random and not enough deliberate aiming at the bull's eye. There needs to be in the teaching of English composition more of the spirit of " This one thing I do". And to know what that one thing should be it is necessary to know what are the most damaging errors to which pupils or students are prone. The answer which this study gives to the question is that, as far as sentences and paragraphs are concerned, errors in unity and in coherence are most common, and should, therefore, receive the major emphasis in teaching.

V

Errors in the Whole Composition

Source of the Material. The study of the whole composition was based upon book reports and special articles, 404 in number, by 110 students. Three general types of compositions are involved in this part of the study: first, short stories and special articles of the feature story type; second, book reports upon novels; and third, book reports upon biography. There were 44 reports of the first type, 90 of the second and 270 of the third. Those who wrote upon biographical subjects were contesting for cash prizes as well as satisfying a departmental requirement in English.

Instruction to Students. The students were instructed to confine themselves, in writing upon a novel, to giving their own reaction to the story, grouped around the central themes, plot, setting, characterization and dialogue, though they were also told to comment upon any other feature of the story that might impress them. In writing upon biographical subjects, they were instructed to sketch the main events of the life of the person as brought out in the book and to follow it at the close by a brief statement of their own impressions of the book and their opinion of the value to be derived from the reading of the story of such a life.[1]

1. The donar of the prizes asked for that sort of treatment.

Method of Scoring . The method of scoring the themes for errors in the whole composition was essentially the same as that used with the sentence and the paragraph and was derived in the same way. Though ten of the textbooks[1] listed discuss the whole composition specifically under the heads of unity, coherence and emphasis, they do not lay down categories that might be used in the classification of the errors under each of the three major types. It was decided, therefore, to observe the following rules in scoring the papers for errors in the whole composition.

1. The introduction into the themes of matter foreign to the subject or central thought of the paper, or any arrangement of the topics such that the central thought could not be traced clearly from first to last was scored as an error in unity.

2. A failure to make the various parts of the composition cling together closely, whether due to the excessive breaking up of the paragraphs or to wrong paragraph sequence was scored as an error in coherence. If, on the other

1. Baldwin--Composition,Oral and Written,pp.
Boynton--Principles of Composition,pp.24-46
Brewster--Composition and Style,pp.53-87
Canby & Others--English Composition,pp.1-69
Espenshade--Essentials of Composition,Rhetoric,pp.23-85
Greenough & Hersey--English Composition,pp.28-45
Herrick & Damon--Composition and Rhetoric,pp342-383
Thomas & Howe--Composition and Rhetoric,pp.1-33
Thorndike & Morse--Elem.of Composition and Rhetoric,pp.114-
Wendell--Composition,pp.41-76

hand, the main points did not stand out clearly and the difficulty could not be traced to one of the causes before mentioned, the composition was scored for an error in emphasis.

3. If the same fault gave rise to both an error in unity and in coherence, the error was recorded under unity; and no fault was scored as an error in emphasis if it also gave rise to an error in unity or in coherence.

On the basis of the classification outlined above, 404 papers, representing approximately 300,000 words, were scored for errors in the whole composition. Table XIII gives the results in condensed form.

Table XIII

The distribution of the errors in whole composition of 110 students.

No. Papers	Total Errors	Errors Unity	Errors Coherence	Errors Emphasis
404	327	83	107	137
		25.3%	33.0%	41.7%

Interpretation of Results. It will be seen from Table XIII that the 404 longer themes read in this connection contained 327 errors in the whole composition. Seventy-seven

free
of the papers were ,therefore, from formal rhetorical errors of the kind under consideration at this point. The fact just mentioned does not signify, of course, that the papers were free from other rhetorical errors but merely that the organization of the compositions as a whole was above serious criticism. About one-fifth of the total number of compositions were in this class.

It will be observed that, contrary to the findings in the case of sentences and of paragraphs, there were fewer errors in unity than in coherence and fewer in coherence than in emphasis. A possible explanation of the results obtained is found in the character of the compositions and of the instructions given. Two-thirds of the papers were book reports of the biographical type and two-thirds of the remainder were based upon novels. The subject matter, especially when taken in connection with the instructions given for writing the reports,(page 47), would have, it would seem, a strong tendency to bring about a unity of treatment, though it would offer no definite suggestions for welding the parts together or for placing stress where stress should rightly belong.

Besides, what to emphasize in any composition and how much is quite largely an individual affair of the writer and only when there is a marked discrepancy between the manifest intention of the writer and his accomplishment can the error be scored objectively. The subjective factor in the scoring may have had something to do with the bunching of the errors

under emphasis. The writer, however, inclines to the opinion that, for the type of compositions and the conditions under which they were written, the distribution of the errors is not far from correct, though he has not the same assurance of correctness that he has in the case of words, of sentences and of paragraphs. The size of the unit itself allows for a freer play of the subjective factor in the scoring.

Need for Drill in making Outlines. But even as matters stand in Table XIII, 25.3% of all the errors in the whole composition were due to the violation of the principle of unity and 33% to the violation of the principle of coherence. And in as much as unity and coherence in the whole composition--and emphasis too for that matter-- are subjects of prevision primarily, the data secured tend to show a need for drill in outlining the whole composition, for, if the student were taught to see his theme as a whole before he ever put pen to paper, he would have little need to fall into errors of unity and he would have won half the battle with coherence.

In scoring the book reports, the writer was impressed that frequently the student had begun to write with a very hazy idea, if any at all, of what he wanted to say. He seemed to be groping in the dark, trusting blindly to inspiration, or to perspiration, to bring him out. He did not always see stretching away before him from starting point to goal the solid highway through endlessly branching by-paths of detail--the very thing a carefully thought-out plan would have enabled

him to do. Most of the errors in unity and in coherence of the whole composition ought to be, and doubtless could be, eliminated before the actual writing begins by emphasis upon carefully prepared outlines. But the data obtained in this study show that, despite the inherent tendency of the subject matter to unity of treatment and despite the very definite instructions given for writing the reports, the students were frequently unable to organize the material so as to give unity and coherence to the whole composition. The results tend to show a need for greater emphasis upon outlining the whole composition prior to the writing process. And it is that very thing that the writer expects to do with his classes hereafter.

VI

General Summary and Conclusion

Though the number of students involved in this study was possibly too few and the number of words read inadequate to justify any dogmatic statements as to the relative frequency of the various types of rhetorical error in the written work of college freshmen, the results obtained seem to warrant the following tentative conclusions and to suggest the desirability of a further extension of the investigation.

1. Errors in the use of words by college freshmen are, as Barrett Wendell pointed out several years ago (16:47), largely errors of impropriety. Though such errors are, on the whole, individualistic, a half dozen or more words are responsible for so many errors that especial emphasis might well be placed upon their correct use. In fact, the writer feels that possibly he has been too indulgent toward such errors in the past and he expects, henceforth, to attack at once and with vigor the slightest tendency to the misuse of the group of words mentioned on pages eight and thirteen. And, judging from the frequency with which certain of those words are misused on the platform and in books, the writer suspects that other teachers have also been over indulgent with reference to errors in their use.

2. The most common error in the construction of sen-

tences and of paragraphs is that in unity. There seems to be an especial need, therefore, of impressing upon high school pupils, and college students as well, the fundamental nature of the sentence and of the paragraph, i. e. that a sentence should express one and only one idea and that a paragraph should be the consistent expansion of one central thought. Too much stress cannot be laid upon this point if it be rightly laid.

But to stress the subject rightly will tax the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the most competent teacher. To give to unity in sentence and in paragraph the emphasis it should have without drawing the attention of the student away from the central purpose of all English composition, that of conveying thought from one mind to another, will give free scope to best powers of the best teachers of the mother tongue. The end cannot be attained merely by set exercises in correcting sentences and paragraphs which are lacking in that quality, though such work, if properly motivated, may at times prove helpful. The student must be led in some way to feel that his fidelity of statement is at stake and that the matter of unity is fundamental in his own thinking processes. He must be made to see that unity in sentence, in paragraph and in whole composition is essentially a question of seeing things clearly and of see-them whole.

3. Errors in coherence in sentence and in paragraph, though less frequent than errors in unity, as shown by this study, are still all too common, especially in sentences. Since the

lack of coherence in a sentence is, in all of its forms, relatively easy to detect, it seems that, with proper emphasis upon the matter in high school, such errors could be largely eliminated before the student reaches college. But since unity and coherence in sentences and in paragraphs and in the whole composition are so largely matters of thinking, one cannot expect too much in that respect of immature boys and girls whether in high school or in college, though there can be no harm, but possibly much good, derived from keeping those principles in the forefront of pupil and student consciousness.

4. The question of unity and of coherence in the sentence, in the paragraph and in the whole composition is quite largely one of right or wrong, a question of saying what is meant. The question of emphasis, however, is primarily a question of better or worse, a question of saying a thing so that it will carry home. Emphasis represents the fine arts side of expression and lies at the basis of the distinction between literature and plain composition. It involves not only the correct arrangement of words in sentences, of sentences in paragraphs and of paragraphs in the whole composition but also the nice choice of words and the subtle turning of phrases. Since so much is included in emphasis, especially as it pertains to sentences, even college students cannot be expected to become past masters in it. It does seem, however, that, if the three ways in which emphasis in a sentence may be destroyed were kept in the forefront of the student's mind, he might be

helped materially in his effort to convey to the mind of another the thought that is in his own. It appears also that much might be accomplished in the way of securing proper emphasis in the paragraph by calling attention to the strategic advantage of placing the important thought at the beginning or at the end, and that in the whole composition the proper spatial distribution of the discussion would of itself tend to make emphatic that which should receive most attention.

5. The scoring of the formal rhetorical errors in the way indicated in this study would have a tendency, the writer believes, to restrict the teacher's proneness to general criticism and also the additional merit of centering the mind of the student upon definite, removable errors. But that, of course, is merely a teaching device.

The important fact revealed by this study is that, though the rhetorical errors of students are numerous and diversified, they have a strong tendency to centralization around a few major types. For instance, rhetorical errors in the use of words are almost wholly improprieties; and the pedagogical problem in diction is the problem of precision in the use of common words. Almost 30% of the errors in the use of words could be traced to eight common words which should have been mastered to the point of automatic correctness in the grades. Approximately 75% of the errors in sentences and in paragraphs arise from violations of the principles of unity and coherence, despite the fact that there is little

question that the ordinary pupil--and the college student was likely not an ordinary pupil--at the time he leaves the high school should be able to write unified and coherent sentences and paragraphs upon any subject with which he is familiar. That he does not do so this study seems to indicate. If subsequent investigations should confirm the findings of this paper, or point more definitely to the real source of the rhetorical difficulties of the college student, the problem of the teacher of English in both high school and college would be simplified and made considerably more definite.

6. The writer is certain that his own teaching has been improved since he undertook this investigation and he is ~~xx~~ confident that, with the facts now at his command, he can make his teaching still more effective in the future. By knowing what the major difficulties of the students are, or likely to be, he is better able to devise plans for removing them. Instead of being compelled to use the barrage on an invisible object, he can fire point blank at the target. He feels, in a word, that the data obtained are exact enough to give them a definite pedagogical value to himself and that an extension of the study would likely yield results of more general educational importance.

7. It is almost needless to add in conclusion that this study makes no attempt to treat all linguistic errors above the level of grammar. There are errors in composition that can be reached by no system of scoring and merits that it would

be criminal to pass over in silence. More than once, however, in the course of this study the writer has been impressed with the number of linguistic defects that may be traced to the violation of a few fundamental rhetorical principles.

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